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The next general meeting of the Granville Historical Society will be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 23rd April 2011 at our Research

Centre

62 Railway Parade Granville
Executive Meeting 1.00 pm

Guest Speaker

Kim Phillips

The Spirits of Gallipoli

Our Centre is open every Wednesday from 10 am to 4 pm and on the fourth Saturday of the month for personal research.

Visitors and members of family history societies are welcome.

A fee applies for non-members

PRESIDENT'S REPORT April 2011

Granville Historical Society

A Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated

Hello! This is the April report, a quarter of the year gone. Happy Easter and break to all our members and readers. The Anzac Day Dawn Service is on at 6.00am at the Granville Youth and Community Centre (the old bowling club) in Memorial Drive, with a breakfast at the Granville RSL. Come and join our community in remembering the men and women who have fought to keep our country safe.

The River Reflections display has been up over a month, has one to go, this appears to have interested many of the community, we have had three phone calls about aspects of the display, this never happened for the Forest.

A member of the Sheather family has given us a photograph



of the Harriett Beecher Sheather camellia named by Silas Sheather after his daughter Harriett. This camellia is still growing in the garden of Fred Sheather. The other camellia that is featured in the display, Prince Frederick William, can still be bought from the Camellia Grove Nursery. Both flowers are over one hundred years old, isn't that fantastic! The other thing that we found to be over two hundred years old was the

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Eastern Swamp Hen, found breeding in the old Goodlett & Smith site in Merrylands. We have also developed a PowerPoint display from the River Reflections display. It only shows a small portion of the photographs, and goes for about an hour. We tested it on the Masonic Widows at Punchbowl last week, and they found it very interesting. These ladies are a treat to talk to; most are in their eighties, one lady was 94, and she does talk about her local area at the Library, truly inspirational.

The society also participated in the back to Saint Bartholomew's Day, good public relations, one membership renewed and a donation. Many visitors to the site had an interesting day and listened to Dr Carol Liston who gave a PowerPoint Presentation about the farmers of the area. A good day was had by all.

Barry G. Bullivant OAM President

THE VANCE AND HARKNESS FAMILIES OF LOCKSLEY HALL

Locksley Hall at Merrylands was originally known as Sutherland House, the name chosen by investor Andrew Sutherland Low, who developed the 80-acre estate between 1879 and 1881. But Low died unexpectedly on 1 September 1894. [Read a profile of A.S.Low and the early history of Sutherland House in the March *Guardian*.]

After his death, the executors of his will and trustees of his estate were forced to sell some of his assets to meet the demands of creditors. His principal asset was an extensive real estate portfolio, valued at more than £50,000 that included blue chip properties in and near the central business district of Sydney. It was a bad time to sell property however; the colony was still in the grip of a recession, which had reached a peak in 1893 when several banks suspended trading. Bankruptcies were still at a very high level, and there were few if any buyers in a very stagnant real estate market. The Low family had vacated Sutherland House by January 1895, and the six bedroom house, with entrance hall, dining, drawing and billiard rooms, schoolroom, bathroom, kitchen, laundry and two servants' bedrooms, as well as a detached brick cottage, boatshed, bathing house, coach house and stables, was offered for lease. The estate was also put up for auction in June 1895 and October 1896, but no buyer was interested.¹

¹ State Records New South Wales (SRNSW), Supreme Court, Probate Jurisdiction, Andrew Low, 323/7872; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 June 1895 p. 7, 2 January 1895 p. 8, 12 June 1895, p. 3, 24 October 1896 p. 15

Joseph Edmund Vance, a businessman and company director, moved into Sutherland House in 1897. Born in 1846, he was brought up at Kiama on the New South Wales south coast. His first job was with a storekeeper at Shellharbour, and from 1868 he was a partner in a produce agency in Sydney. He had married Jane Mitchell at Kiama in 1872, but she died in 1890. While he was living at Glebe Point in September 1896, his only child, 23-year-old Ida Gwendoline Vance, married William Stanger Kelk, the eldest son of William Coates Kelk, a Bathurst magistrate, draper and political identity. Ten months later, on 13 December 1897, Joseph Vance, then aged 52, married his son-in-law's youngest sister, 19-year-old Emily Stanger Kelk, in the Bathurst Wesleyan Church.²

Vance was involved in negotiations around this time to rescue the ailing engineering firm, Hudson Brothers. In October 1898, he joined Joseph Noakes, Henry Hudson, Thomas Irons, William Rigg, John Woods and James Angus in founding the Clyde Engineering Company Limited to take over the Hudson Brothers works at Granville. Vance remained a director of Clyde Engineering until his death at his home at Roseville in 1928. Joseph and Emily Vance had five children; four were born at Sutherland House, and the fifth in 1911 after they had moved to Bondi.³

Vance left the Granville District in the early part of 1906 after holding a clearance sale on the estate. Offered at the auction were farming implements, a buggy, sulky, and livestock, including five saddle, harness and farm horses, six milking cows, two pedigree bulls, two heifers and an emu. Sutherland House had been sold and the buyer required vacant possession! Matilda Harkness, the widow of a rich Cooma grazier, William Harkness, had bought the property and changed its name to Locksley Hall. William Harkness had come to New South Wales from Scotland in 1860 as a 20-year-old, and worked initially as an overseer. About a dozen years later he began to acquire land of his own, and when he died in 1903, he had accumulated much rural property in the Monaro district, including the 7,600 acre sheep station Lincluden. In 1875 he had married Matilda Haslingden, the sixth of nine children of Edward Haslingden, a Bega grazier. Haslingden had gone looking for business opportunities after he arrived in Sydney from England in 1832, and become a trustee of the old St Phillips Church. He had acquired a large property in the Monaro, but moved to Bega in 1857.⁴

Matilda Harkness took over her Merrylands estate in 1907. Sadly, her eldest daughter, Mina Annie, aged 31, passed away in August that year. Eighteen months later, her youngest daughter, Mary Maud Matilda Harkness, who was born in 1885, married William Whaley Hedges, the son of John Richard and Beatrice Ida Hedges. After their marriage, the couple settled on a property at Rock Flat near Cooma that Mary had inherited from her father's estate. Her husband, who was born at Elizabeth Farm House Rose Hill in 1881, embarked on a political career after taking a leading role in the local graziers' association at Cooma, and represented Monaro in the New South Wales Parliament from 1927 to 1941.⁵

² Vance Obituary, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 July 1928 p. 16, 19 September 1896 p. 1, 31 July 1897 p. 1

³ T. Fowlie, *The History of Granville 1919*, Granville Historical Society, p. 75; Obituary, op. cit., NSW Births Deaths and Marriages.

⁴ Monaro Pioneers website, www.monaropioneers.com

⁵ Death Notice, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August 1907 p. 4; Former Members NSW Parliament, <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlament/members.nsf/V3ListFormerMembers> ; Monaro Pioneers website

The other daughter, Ida Jane Haslingden Harkness, born in 1881, remained with her mother at Locksley Hall and became very active in the Granville community. She was heavily involved with St Mark's Anglican Church and was regarded as one of its most generous parishioners. She was a member of the Parish Committee from 1911, and a member of the Diocesan Council of the Girls' Friendly Society. She was the first secretary of the Granville Red Cross branch after its formation in 1914, and during World War I was described as 'a most enthusiastic worker for the boys at the front.' In 1920 she loaned the church £1,000 interest-free to enable it to complete the Soldiers' Memorial Peace Chapel.⁶

Matilda Harkness died at Locksley Hall on 21 November 1916, aged 69, after being in poor health for some time, and was buried at Mittagang Cemetery at Cooma. Ida Harkness moved from Locksley Hall to central Granville after her mother's death. On 27 December 1919, her good friend, Frances Ross, the wife of the Rector of St Mark's from 1901 to 1922, the Reverend Alfred Ernest Jones Ross, died after a long illness. A year later, the Rector was granted 12 months leave of absence. And at the end of the Christmas festival in 1920, Alfred Ross and Ida Harkness slipped away from Granville to marry in a small ceremony at Rose Bay on New Year's Day 1921.⁷

The Reverend Mr Ross and his heavily pregnant wife returned from his extended leave in January 1922, but he conducted only one Sunday service after announcing he had accepted a new parish appointment at Enmore. The move was unfortunately tragic. Ida Ross passed away two months later, aged 40, on 26 March 1922, after giving birth to a baby boy. The son, Francis Ernest Harkness Ross, survived, but died of wounds at Borneo in World War II, aged 23.⁸

A developer, the Intercolonial Investment Company Limited, purchased Locksley Hall and its 80-acre estate from the Harkness family in October 1918 with the intention of subdividing the land for housing. The first 56 allotments were sold at auction in October 1919 for an average of £114 per block. The Commonwealth War Service Homes Commission bought 10 blocks the following year for World War I veterans. In January 1937, the Intercolonial company called tenders for 'the purchase, demolition and removal' of Locksley Hall in Malvern Avenue Merrylands, and the one-time grand mansion was demolished on 23 February 1937.⁹

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⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 November 1908 p. 11, *Cumberland Argus*, 20 April 1912, 4 August 1920 p. 1

⁷ *Cumberland Argus*, 25 November 1916 p. 5, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 November 1919 p. 12, *Cumberland Argus*, 3 January 1921 p. 2,

⁸ N.Hubbard, *One Hundred Years, St Mark's Granville, 1882-1982*, Anglican Parish of St Mark, Granville, 1982, p. 29, Australian War Memorial, Roll of Honour

⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1918 p. 9, 25 October 1919 p. 9, 4 February 1920 p. 9, 19 January 1937 p.